



88th Legislative Session Report

The fast-moving and historic 88th legislature ended on Monday, May 29th. During these 140 legislative days, we were able to achieve most of the items on [TPA's agenda](#). For instance, we saw the Mental Health Loan Repayment Program funding accepted by the House and the Senate, the protection of personal information of license applicants bill, also move through both houses and a last-minute win for psychologists in the quest to obtain a statutory language change which will allow psychologists to conduct guardianship evaluations and make recommendations to the courts without oversight from physicians! This session was an overall success for Texas Psychologists! By advocating for TPA, we have deepened our understanding of the profession and strengthened key relationships that will inform how we may support psychologists in future sessions.

TPA is grateful to our lobby team and Legislative Committee, who worked tirelessly to monitor and research bills, testify, meet with representatives, senators, and staffers, and advocate for the doctoral standard. Alongside our successes, several bills we opposed have been sent to the governor to be signed. This list of bills sent to the governor for signature includes a bill allowing chaplains to serve as school counselors, and another bill banning gender-affirming care for minors. When the deadline passed, a total of 8,153 bills and joint resolutions had been filed, and many of those impacted human health and welfare. TPA provided expertise and empirically supported scientific knowledge to support positions against bills that will ultimately erode human rights and welfare. Our volunteers contributed an incredible amount of time and energy on behalf of the membership and those we serve, monitoring and testifying on critical bills. Below is a high-level overview of key bills

we tracked in this session. For a complete list, see the [bill track](#) and more details below.

Special Thanks to the TPA Legislative Committee and Lobby Team:

Chair: Jennifer Rockett	Hani Talebi
William July	Frances Douglas
Stephanie Robertson	David Hill
Cheryl Hall	Sophia Tani
Joseph McCoy	Shawn Hirsch
Megan Mooney	Susan Chanderbhan-Forder
Robin Burks	Michael Ditsky
Elle Lockart	Charlotte Parrott
Aaron Gregg	Ikenna Okoro
Mary Beth Kiser	

A special session was called and will wrap up later this summer. Our advocacy efforts have not stopped. One of the main initiatives in TPA's current strategic plan is to broaden the association's impact by developing productive relationships with external entities through targeted education and coordinated advocacy efforts that promote the doctoral standard of psychology and the mental and behavioral health of the public. Leadership and staff will create opportunities to develop relationships with stakeholders and lawmakers during the interim. The RxP division will meet regularly to prepare for the 89th legislative session. We are seeking out grant opportunities that will help fund our work on this bill. We would welcome your participation if you are interested in getting involved in any of these efforts. Please email marybeth@texaspsyc.org.

Legislative Priority Items

[Increase Mental Health Loan Repayment Program Funding](#)

[HB1](#), Bonnen, General Appropriations Bill.
- 06/18/2023 Effective on 9/1/23

- Contains \$14 million/year for the Mental Health Loan Repayment Program.

Protect Personal Information of Mental Health Providers

[SB510](#), Perry, Relating to the confidentiality of certain information maintained by state licensing agencies.

- 05/19/2023 Effective on 9/1/23
- We worked closely with Sen. Perry's office to shepherd this bill through the process. A TPA member, Dr. Frances Douglas, was the only individual to testify for this bill.

Allow Qualified Psychologists to Prescribe

[HB343](#), Goodwin, Relating to the prescriptive authority of certain psychologists; authorizing a fee.

- Unfortunately, the House Public Health Committee did not give this bill a hearing.

Improve Guardianship

[SB1624](#), Zaffirini, Relating to guardianships and services for incapacitated persons and to the emergency detention of certain persons with mental illness.

- 06/18/2023 Effective on 9/1/23
- Although a House deadline prevented our original bill, HB4107, from being heard on the House floor, we were able to add functionally equivalent language to this bill.

Other Notable Legislation (and our position)

[SB14](#), Campbell, Relating to prohibitions on the provision to certain children of procedures and treatments for gender transitioning, gender reassignment, or gender dysphoria and on the use of public

money or public assistance to provide those procedures and treatments.

- 06/02/2023 Effective on 9/1/23
- TPA Position: AGAINST

[HB400](#), Klick, Relating to innovation grant programs to support residency training programs in psychiatric specialty fields and recruitment, training, and retention programs in behavioral health fields.

- 06/12/2023 Effective on 9/1/23
- Conducting a study on how RxP may lead to the retention of psychologists in Texas would qualify for an innovation grant under this legislation.
- TPA Position: FOR

[HB446](#), Craddick, Relating to the terminology used in statute to refer to intellectual disability and certain references to abolished health and human services agencies.

- 05/15/2023 Effective on 9/1/23
- TPA Position: FOR

[HB1337](#), Hull, Relating to step therapy protocols required by health benefit plans for coverage of prescription drugs for serious mental illnesses.

- 06/12/2023 Effective on 9/1/23
- TPA Position: FOR

[HR1226](#), Plesa, Honoring the Texas Psychological Association on the occasion of Psychology Week 2023.

- 04/26/2023 Reported enrolled
- TPA Position: FOR





Read what our February attendees had to say about their experience:

"This is my first time to the capitol and my first legislative day. I feel like I have been on a field trip in the best of ways. My dreams remain!" - Dr. Kari Leveall

"There was more enthusiasm for discussing mental health issues and bills this session than there has been in the past" - Dr. Frances Douglass

"There was so much interest in mental health and our issues are being heard. It is important for us to be a resource to our legislators" - Dr. Carol Grothues

